

Easter Sunday

'Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.' The first element we discover in the framework of the Easter events is the empty tomb.

[CCC 640]

On the second morning after Jesus' burial, some women who were his followers, came to anoint the body of Jesus as was the Jewish custom. They had not been able to do it the previous day as it was the Sabbath and work was not permitted on that day.

In Mark's [16:1-4], Luke's [24:1-3] and John's [20:1-2] Gospels the women arrive after the stone covering the tomb entrance has been rolled away. In Matthew's Gospel [28:1-4] when the women come to the tomb, they experience an earthquake and the appearance of an Angel who rolls the stone away.

Matthew is writing for a Jewish audience and puts the story in a more dramatic way as his audience would have been used to such a style of writing in some of the books of the Old Testament.

The important thing is that the tomb is empty. There is no sign of Jesus' body. In Matthew's, Mark's and Luke's Gospels they are assured by an Angel that Jesus has risen from the dead. The women led by Mary Magdalene who is named in all the Gospel accounts, are the first witnesses to the empty tomb and they hurry away to tell the disciples what they have seen.

This wonderful event rekindles in Jesus' followers the belief that Jesus is the Messiah; that what he taught about his loving Father is true, and that we can be hope-filled people.

ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE IN THIS LESSON

Matthew 28:1-10 | *The Resurrection*

The women do not find the dead body of Jesus in the tomb as they expected. Rather they find an angel. The message of the angel is the revelation from God of his action regarding Jesus. It represents an early formulation of the faith of the early church: To point to something that is beyond our everyday experience, we must use imagery and analogy. To speak of what God did to Jesus after his death, Matthew chooses the simple word 'raised' that he used when Jesus raised Simon's mother-in-

law from her bed [Matthew 8:15], and when the disciples roused Jesus from sleep during the storm [Matthew 8:25]. More mysteriously, this same word was used when Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from her 'sleep' [Matthew 9:25].

When God raises a person from the 'sleep' of death, he raises that person not back to this life by a kind of resuscitation, but to the life-beyond-death. At the Last Supper, Jesus shared with his disciples his confidence that God would not leave him in death: Because of certain ways in which they experienced the risen Jesus, Jesus' disciples came to believe that he who was crucified was in truth alive and active among them after his death.

God had raised him from death into the life-beyond-death. It was the wonder of this that brought them through their fright and the shattering of their hopes to the new energy that empowered them to do to others what Jesus had done to them.

It was this Spirit that brought about the incredible growth of the Christian community. It is this foundational belief that is presented by Matthew as the explanation for the absence of Jesus' dead body. The resurrected life is not simply a new beginning. All that made up Jesus' humanity is caught up in the transforming mystery of grace. The empty tomb and the dramatic language before us in this ritual text depict for us the wonderful truth that death is robbed of its prey, and that the final victory is not with darkness but with light.

The Gospel according to Saint Matthew. An Introductory Commentary.
Michael Fallon MSC. Chevalier Press. Australia. 2005.

Easter Sunday



MAIN TEACHING AND LEARNING POINTS

- Jesus was raised from the dead.
- On Easter Sunday, the Church community celebrates the resurrection of Jesus.

EASTER

Easter is a time of great rejoicing in the Church because we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. To celebrate this wonderful event, the Church community for the first time since Ash Wednesday proclaims with joy the words, 'Alleluia, Alleluia!' which means 'Praise God!' The word 'Alleluia' is used throughout the season of Easter and at every Mass (*except through Lent*). This is because the Church community wants to keep remembering and celebrating that Jesus has risen and is always with us, guiding and strengthening us.

GOD'S WORD

Matthew 28:1-10 | *The Resurrection*

Parent: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Child responds: *Glory to you, O Lord.* (While saying the words, trace a small cross with the thumb on the forehead, lips and heart.)

After the Sabbath, as Sunday morning was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake; an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled the stone away and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid that they trembled and became like dead men. The angel spoke to the women. 'You must not be afraid,' he said. 'I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has been raised, just as he said. Come here and see the place where he was lying. Go quickly, now, and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from death, and now he is going to Galilee ahead of you; there you will see him!' Remember what I have told you.' So they left the tomb in a hurry, afraid and yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Peace be with you.' They came up to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. 'Do not be afraid,' Jesus said to them. 'Go and tell me brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.' [GNT]

The Gospel of the Lord.

Child responds: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

FOCUS QUESTIONS

Ask your child the following questions to help them reflect on the Scripture.

- Where did Mary Magdalene and the other Mary go on Sunday morning?
- What happened when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary arrived at the tomb?
- Who appeared to them?
- What did the angel say to the women?
- What proof did the angel give the woman that Jesus had been raised?
- What did the angel command the women to do?
- Why do you think the angel told the women to remember what the angel had told them?
- How did the women feel as they ran to tell the disciples the message of the angel?
- When Jesus met the women what did he say to them?
- How did the women respond?
- How did Jesus respond to the women?
- What did Jesus instruct the women to do?
- What do you think this story reveals to us?

PRAYER – THE MYSTERY OF FAITH

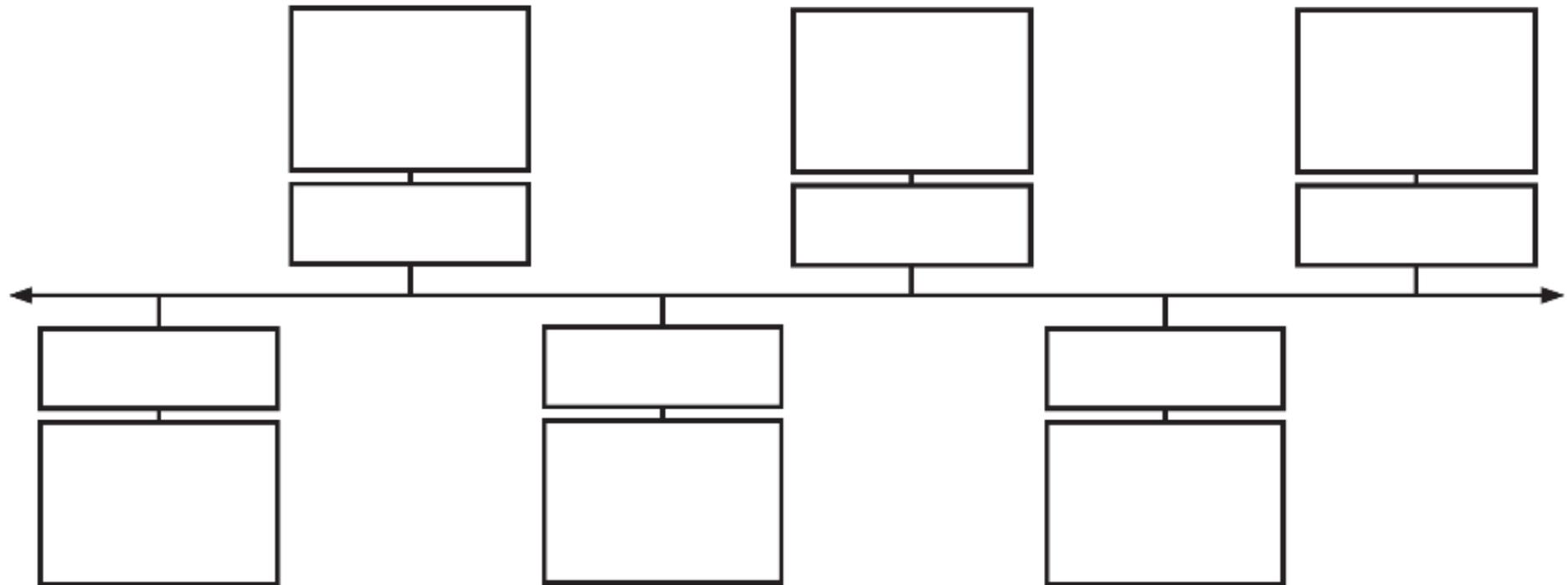
Begin the prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

Parent We proclaim your death, O Lord.
All Alleluia! Christ is risen!
Child We profess your resurrection.
All Alleluia! Christ is risen!
Parent We wait until you come again.
All Alleluia! Christ is risen!
Parent Let us pray:
All We proclaim your death, O Lord.
 and profess your Resurrection
 until you come again.
 Amen.



Easter Timeline

Cut out the Easter events at the bottom of the page and glue them down in the correct order along the timeline. Draw a symbol or picture inside each square to match each event.



Two Marys' went to the tomb.

Jesus died on the Cross.

Jesus was put in a tomb.

Alleluia! Jesus is Risen!

The tomb was empty.

The stone was rolled away.